

Message Text

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10

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 ORM-02 OMB-01 /086 W

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R 180930Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7179

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2503

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM PINS LA

SUBJECT: LPDR'S ISLAND "RE-EDUCATION CENTERS"

REF: VIENTIANE 2401

1. THE VERNACULAR DAILY "NEW VIENTIANE" OCTOBER 18 REPORTED THAT INTERNATIONAL VISITORS FROM A TOTAL OF "55 SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND 82 NATIONS HAD PRAISED THE LPDR'S RE-EDUCATION CAMPS ON "MR. AND MRS. ISLANDS" IN THE NAM NGUM RESERVOIR. THE ARTICLE CLAIMED THAT VISITORS HAD EXTOLLED THE POSITIVE RESULTS ACHIEVED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM IN CURING DRUG ADDICTS AND IN REHABILITATING "VICTIMS OF THE OLD REGIME" WHO HAD ABANDONED THEIR BAD HABITS TO BECOME USEFUL CITIZENS OF THE NATION."

2. RECENTLY, THE LOCAL PRESS REPORTED THAT A TOTAL OF 225 FORMER INMATES HAD BEEN RELEASED FROM THE ISLANDS TO BEGIN LIFE ANEW UNDER THE NEW (COMMUNIST) SYSTEM

3. COMMENT: WHILE VARIUS FOREIGN DELEGATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS HAVE VISITED THE "RE-EDUCATION CENTERS" IN RECENTS MONTHS (REF-TEL), THE ASSERTION THAT REPRESENTATIVES FROM 55 SOCIAL ORGANIZA-
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TIONS AND 82 NATIONS HAVE GONE THERE SEEMS GREATLY EXAGGERATED.

EQUALLY UNTRUE IS THE ASSERTION THAT FOREIGN REACTION TO THESE ISLANDS OF ENCHANTMENT CUM PENAL INSTITUTIONS HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY POSITIVE. A UNDP REPRESENTATIVE HAS DESCRIBED IN DEPRESSING TONES FOR EMBOFF THE "SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS OF ENTHUSIASM" BY INMATES WHICH WERE OBVIOUSLY STAGED BY THE AUTHORITIES FOR VISITING FOREIGNERS. A WEST GERMAN TELEVISION CREW WHICH FILMED LIFE ON THE ISLANDS ALSO TERMED THE CENTERS "CONCENTRATION CAMPS." (THE CREW WAS IMMEDIATELY ASKED TO LEAVE THE LPDR.)
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